

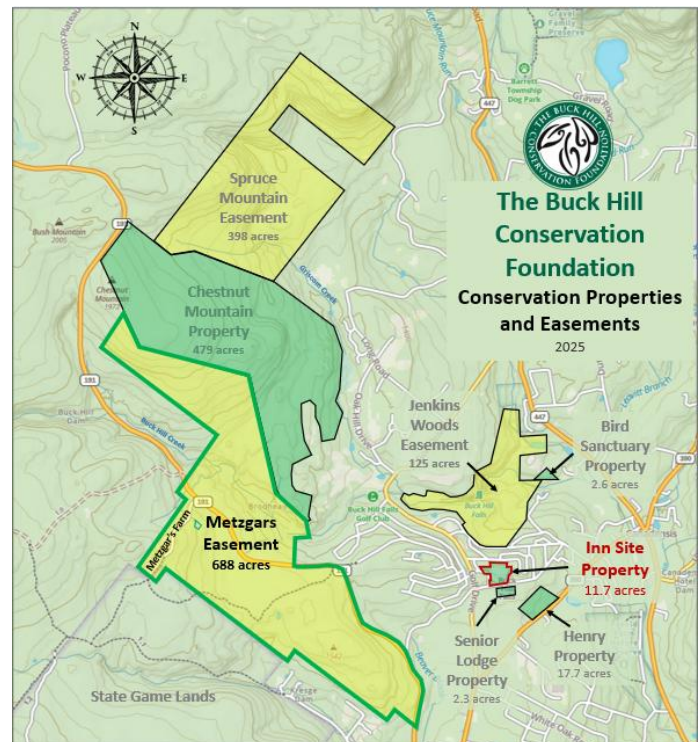
Inn Site Swap Complete!

The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation and The Buck Hill Falls Company are pleased to announce the Inn Site Swap was recorded on February 4, 2025. The Foundation exchanged its 11.7-acre Inn Site property for a 687.5-acre Metzgars Conservation Easement on Company land. The Company is now once again the owner of the Inn Site, and the Foundation has increased land under its management to 1712 acres.

Plans to secure a conservation easement in this area date back to 2014, when the Foundation was ultimately not able to raise sufficient grant funding. The plans changed in 2019, when the Company and Foundation agreed to conduct an IRS 1031 tax-deferred exchange of Inn Site properties for a conservation easement on both Company and Buck Hill Water Company land. However, this plan was thwarted by the PA Public Utilities Commission's opposition to an exchange involving Water Company land. After some reworking of the proposal, the final plan was agreed in 2024 for an exchange without Water Company property.

This exchange is a win-win-win for the Company, the Foundation and our community:

- The Company will continue plans for a Signature Project on the Inn Site, while continuing to own the easement property and retain current passive recreational uses.
- The Foundation will further its mission by increasing the land it protects in perpetuity by two-thirds and by working on forest management plans to promote the health of the new conservation easement land.
- For our community, this new conservation easement will create a contiguous ~6,000-acre watershed conservation area by establishing a key link between Chestnut Mountain to the north and the State Game Lands to the south. According to the [Monroe County 2022 Return on Environment Study](#), large, forested areas such as this “provide significant natural system benefits: they help maintain healthy watersheds and water quality, filter air pollutants, moderate weather extremes, and provide important wildlife habitats.”



The Foundation's project to secure the Metzgars Conservation Easement was supported by our donors and through the Open Space Institute's Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund, which is made possible with a lead grant from the William Penn Foundation. The Delaware River Watershed Protection Program seeks to ensure abundant, clean water within the 13,000 square mile drainage of the Delaware River. In order to qualify for the grant, the Foundation previously became an accredited land trust by the national Land Trust Alliance.



Garry Cramer, President and COO of the Buck Hill Falls Co, and Ed Post, Vice President of The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation, shake hands after closing on the Inn Site Swap.

What is a conservation easement?

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement to restrict certain land use rights, such as development, to protect and enhance the richness of biodiversity and natural habitat of the land.

- The Buck Hill Falls Company continues to own the property and will retain current passive recreational uses.
- The Buck Hill Conservation Foundation must uphold and defend the terms and conditions of the easement and can perform resource management activities in furtherance of the conservation objectives of the property.

The easement is granted in perpetuity and runs with the land, binding all future owners.

The following provides a brief history of the area, its conservation values and the Foundation’s initial forest management plans for the area:

History

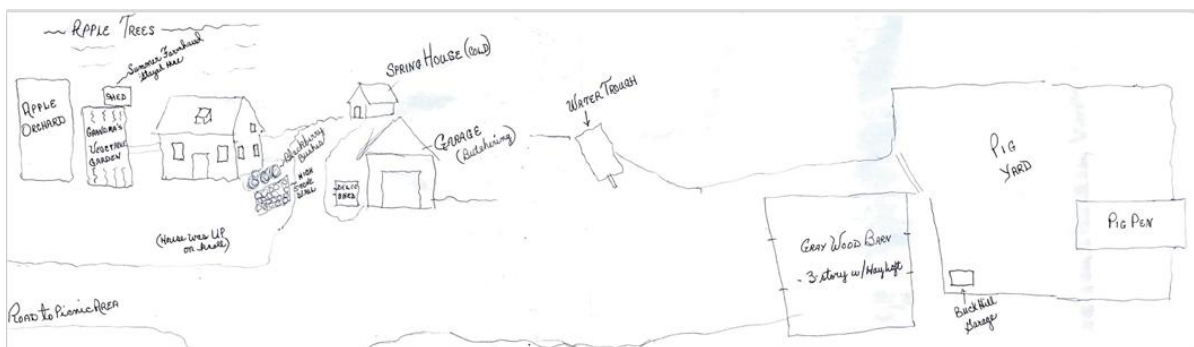
Most of the currently forested areas of the Metzgars Conservation Easement were logged in the late 19th century for both lumber and bark, which was used for tanning hides. Several of the current trails were used as logging roads and for a gravity rail line, which ran to a tannery and lumber mill in Mountainhome. Parcels of land in this area were obtained by the Company in the first half of the 20th century, primarily from the Huguenin, Price, and Shaffer families.

Metzgar’s Farm was purchased by Benjamin Franklin (Frank) Metzgar, after selling his 21-acre farm in Buck Hill Falls to the Company in 1901. His house once stood near the flower garden on Lot #48.



Frank Metzgar’s Home in BHF

Frank and his son, Earl, established a new 35-acre farmstead at Metzgar’s Farm, complete with a 2-story residence, 3-story barn, garage, shed (that housed a summer farmhand) and a small spring house. This sketch of the farmstead layout was prepared by their granddaughter, Karen Metzgar Lyons:



While the main farming activities were raising pigs and milk cows, there was also an apple orchard and a small vegetable garden. The pigs were fed food waste from the Buck Hill Inn, that was spread in the fields. The farm was purchased by the Company in 1956 after Earl's passing and farming activities had ceased. As the current picnic area was being cleared by the Company, hundreds (if not thousands) of pieces of silverware were recovered from where the pigs once roamed, to be reused at the Inn. The aging farmstead buildings were demolished in 2009, except for the spring house, which still remains along with a few apple trees.

Another residential dwelling and small farm owned by Earl's brother, Charles Metzgar, was located on Route 191. The building was reportedly demolished in the 1950's. The clearing where this farm once stood is now "Lotties Patch", named after Charles' wife, and is where Lotties Farm Trail begins.

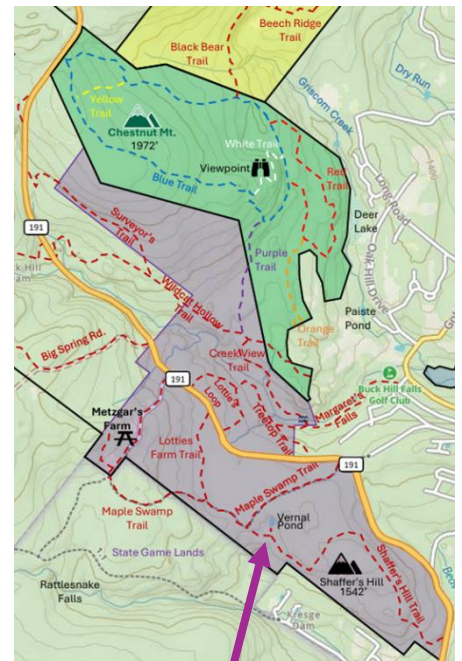


Charles Metzgar's Home on Rt 191

Conservation Values

The conservation values of the area are significant by many measures:

- **Water Resources.** The conservation easement will help maintain and improve the quality of water resources, both surface and groundwater, within, around, and downstream of the area. Notable attributes within the area are ~ 2.5-miles of Exceptional Value stream and over 18-acres of wetland.
- **Biological Resources.** The conservation easement will help protect and improve the quality of natural habitat for animals, plants, fungi, and other organisms. The most notable attribute of the area is the mature forest with structural diversity which plays a critical role in suitability of wildlife habitat. This area has the added benefit of creating a contiguous ~6,000-acre watershed conservation area by establishing a key link between Chestnut Mountain to the north and the State Game Lands to the south. The area also contains several vernal ponds, which are seasonal breeding and feeding grounds for amphibians, insects, reptiles, birds, and mammals, before the ponds typically dry up in the summer. The absence of fish in these ponds enables amphibians and invertebrates to breed and develop.
- **Soil Resources.** The conservation easement will help maintain abundant tree, shrub, and herbaceous vegetation which prevent erosion.
- **Ecosystem Services.** The conservation easement will help maintain rainwater absorption, that otherwise might cause flooding downstream of the area, and carbon sequestration in plants and soil, to mitigate rising atmospheric carbon levels. Total forest carbon volume contained in this area is currently over 70,000 metric tons, and sequestration is expected to increase this volume by ~140 metric tons per year.
- **Scenic and Recreational Resources.** The conservation easement will help preserve the scenic overlook of Metzgar's Farm and numerous hiking trails, which connect with trails on the adjacent Chestnut Mountain conservation area and on Company lands. In totality, the protection of this land will help to retain the natural aesthetic and rural character of the Buck Hill Falls community.



Metzgars Conservation Easement

Forest Management Plans

In accordance with our mission, our Foundation is already working on forest management plans to promote the health of the forest and watershed within the Metzgars Conservation Easement. We've already begun expanding the scope of our Hemlock Conservation Project upstream of Jenkins Woods into this area. Other planned

stewardship projects include invasive plant remediation (particularly around Metzgar's Farm) and, depending on funding, additional dynamic forest restoration work on Shaffer's Hill (similar to our work recently completed on Chestnut Mountain).

Our Foundation is truly grateful to be able to conserve this area in perpetuity, and for the support of our donors that enables our mission. We look forward to reporting on our work and to seeing you on the trails to fully appreciate and enjoy our wonderful surroundings.